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Appl. No. 09/918,032*Amendments to the Claims*

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1-25 (cancelled)

26. (previously presented) A system for distributed file storage comprising:
a plurality of servers providing, to a plurality of clients, file access services for
accessing files stored on the plurality of servers; and

a list of neighbor servers maintained by each server, wherein the neighbor servers are
a subset of the plurality of servers,

wherein the files are divided into a plurality of pieces stored on the plurality of
servers, and

wherein the list is used to obtain information for reconstructing files stored on the
neighbor servers.

27. (previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the servers use a
peer-to-peer network for communication with each other.

28. (previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the files are stored
using a peer-to-peer network.

29. (previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the servers are
functionally equivalent such that when a file is divided into N pieces stored on N servers,
any K out of the N servers can be used to reconstruct the file.

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30. (previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein at least one of the servers is a logical server that includes a plurality of physical servers connected via a network.

31. (previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein each server belongs to a group defined by its corresponding list,

wherein a server that belongs to multiple groups maintains corresponding multiple lists for each group to which it belongs, and

wherein, upon receiving a request for a file, the server distributes the request to each of the multiple groups.

32. (previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein none of the pieces is unique.

33. (previously presented) A method for distributed file storage comprising:
dividing a plurality of servers into a plurality of groups, with each server belonging to at least one group;

on each server, maintaining a list of neighbor servers belonging to the same group;

supporting file access services on each of the servers;

dividing a file into a plurality of pieces that are derived from the file; and

storing each of the pieces on servers selected from the list.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising using a peer-to-peer network for communication between the servers.

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35. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising using a peer-to-peer network for storing the file.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising maintaining functional equivalence among the servers.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising verifying availability of the neighbor servers.

38. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the list is a dynamic list, and further comprising:

polling the servers on the dynamic list of the neighbor servers and measuring a network distance for each server;

keeping each available server on the dynamic list in the same group;

removing unavailable servers from the dynamic list of the same group; and

switching at least one server of the plurality of servers into a neighbor group of servers if the measured network distance is lower than a predetermined threshold.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein better network connectivity is determined based on the network distance.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, further comprising:

polling the dynamic list;

connecting a client to a server on the dynamic list;

switching the client to a different server on the dynamic list that has a smaller workload or lower network ~~metric~~ distance relative to the client; and

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delivering to the client a file requested by the client that is stored on the servers.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, further comprising:
polling the dynamic list;

connecting a client to a server on the dynamic list;

switching the client to a different server on the dynamic list that has a lower network distance from a perspective of the client; and

delivering to the client a file requested by the client that is stored on the servers.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the list is a static list of servers.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising:
maintaining multiple lists for a server that belongs to multiple groups; and,

upon receiving a request for a file, distributing the request to servers selected from the multiple groups.

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein none of the pieces is unique.

45. (previously presented) A method of accessing files in a distributed file storage system comprising:

dividing a plurality of the servers into a plurality of groups, wherein each server belongs to at least one group;

supporting file access services on each of the servers for accessing a file stored on the servers;

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at each server, maintaining a list of neighbor servers that belong to the same group;
generating a plurality of pieces from the file; and
distributing the plurality of pieces to the neighbor servers in the same group in order
to achieve a desired fault tolerance level, wherein the fault tolerance level is defined by how
many servers out of the total number of servers can fail.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising using a
peer-to-peer network for communication between the servers.

47. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising using a
peer-to-peer network to store the file.

48. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising
maintaining functional equivalence of the servers for purposes of storing the file.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising verifying
availability of the neighbor servers.

50. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising:
polling the list of neighboring group servers and measuring a relative network
distance for each client-server pair;
connecting a client to any of the servers on the list using the measured metric;
switching the client to a server on the list that has a lower relative network distance
and a smaller workload to improve a level of service; and
delivering, to the client, the file requested by the client.

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51. (canceled)

52. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising:
polling servers on the list that belong to the same group;
connecting a client to any of the servers on the list that belong to the same group;
switching the client to a server on the list that has a smaller workload; and
delivering, to the client, the file that is requested by the client.

53. (previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising:
identifying a name of the file in namespace;
sending a request for the file from the client to the server to which the client is
connected;
sending a request for the file from the server to which the client is connected to a
neighbor server;
distributing the request to other servers if the server to which the client is connected
cannot provide the file pieces information;
checking for file pieces in a local cache of each server that received the request;
sending the pieces to the server to which the client is connected;
transferring the pieces to the client; and
assembling the file on the client.

54. (previously presented) The method of claim 52, further comprising sending
all the pieces from the neighbor servers to the server to which the client is connected
simultaneously.

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55. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the list is a static list of servers.
56. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, wherein none of the pieces is unique.
57. (previously presented) A method of naming files in a distributed file storage system comprising:
dividing a plurality of servers into a plurality of groups such that each server belongs to at least one group;
supporting file access services on each of the servers for accessing files stored on the servers;
giving file names for the files uniformly and independent of location of the files on the servers;
storing the files on the servers using the names; and
accessing the files using the file access services from any of servers.
58. (previously presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising using a peer-to-peer network for communication between the servers
59. (previously presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising maintaining functional equivalence of the servers.
60. (previously presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising verifying availability of the neighbor servers.
61. (previously presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising:

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on each server, maintaining a dynamic list of the neighbor servers in the same group;
polling servers on the dynamic list;
connecting a client to any of the servers on the dynamic list;
switching the client to a server on the dynamic list that has lower network distance to improve level of service; and
delivering to the client a file requested by the client that is stored on the servers.

62. (canceled)

63. (previously presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising:
on each server, maintaining a dynamic list of the neighbor servers;
polling servers on the dynamic list that belong to the same group;
connecting a client to any of the servers on the dynamic list;
switching the client to a server on the dynamic list that has a smaller workload; and
delivering to the client a file requested by the client that is stored on the servers.

64. (previously presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising:
maintaining a uniform name space as a tree with a common root and a logical path to each stored file as part of the distributed file storage system; and
maintaining data files and directory files to be stored in the distributed file storage system.

65. (previously presented) The method of claim 64, further comprising:
maintaining the directory files as executable files with their own executable code and data; and

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providing translation from a logical path inside the uniform name space to a unique file identifier using the directory files.

66. (previously presented) A system for organizing distributed file storage comprising:

N functionally equivalent servers each providing file access services, for a plurality of clients, to files stored on the servers, such that when a file is divided into N pieces stored on the N servers, any K out of the N servers can be used to reconstruct the file; and

the files being divided into the N pieces stored on the N servers,

wherein information for reconstructing the files is obtained from the N servers.

67. (previously presented) The system of claim 66, further comprising a dynamic list of neighbor servers maintained by each server,

wherein the neighbor servers are a subset of the plurality of servers, and

wherein the dynamic list is used to obtain the information for reconstructing the files.

68. (previously presented) The system of claim 66, further comprising a static list of neighbor servers maintained by each server,

wherein the neighbor servers are a subset of the plurality of servers, and

wherein the static list is used to obtain the information for reconstructing the files.

69. (previously presented) A computer program product for distributed file storage, the computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for controlling a processor, the computer program logic comprising:

computer program code means for dividing a plurality of servers into a plurality of groups, with each server belonging to at least one group;

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on each server, computer program code means for maintaining a list of neighbor servers belonging to the same group;

computer program code means for supporting file access services on each of the servers;

computer program code means for dividing a file into a plurality of pieces that are derived from the file; and

computer program code means for storing each of the pieces on servers selected from the list.

70. (new) A method of accessing files in a distributed file storage system comprising:

dividing a plurality of the servers into dynamically reconfigurable groups, wherein each server belongs to at least one group that is reconfigurable based on minimum network distance;

supporting file access services on each of the servers for accessing a file distributed among the servers;

generating a plurality of pieces from the file; and

distributing the plurality of pieces to the neighbor servers in the same group in order to achieve a desired fault tolerance level based on how many servers out of the plurality of servers are available.

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